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ABSTRACT

This study presents information regarding evaluation practices and preferences in alternative schools. Data were collected from 118 participants attending a series of institutes dealing with alternative schools. The 8-item questionnaire includes the following topics: (a) affiliation with alternative schools or programs, (b) procedures for conducting evaluation, (c) purposes of evaluation, (d) factors preventing improved evaluation programs, (e) services needed in the area of evaluation, (f) receptivity to the idea of a center to provide needed services, (g) needed research, and (h) additional comments. This study supports the conclusion that alternative school personnel are receptive to evaluation especially when the information gained is used for program development. Lack of time, money, and personnel constitute major deterrents to improvement. (Author)

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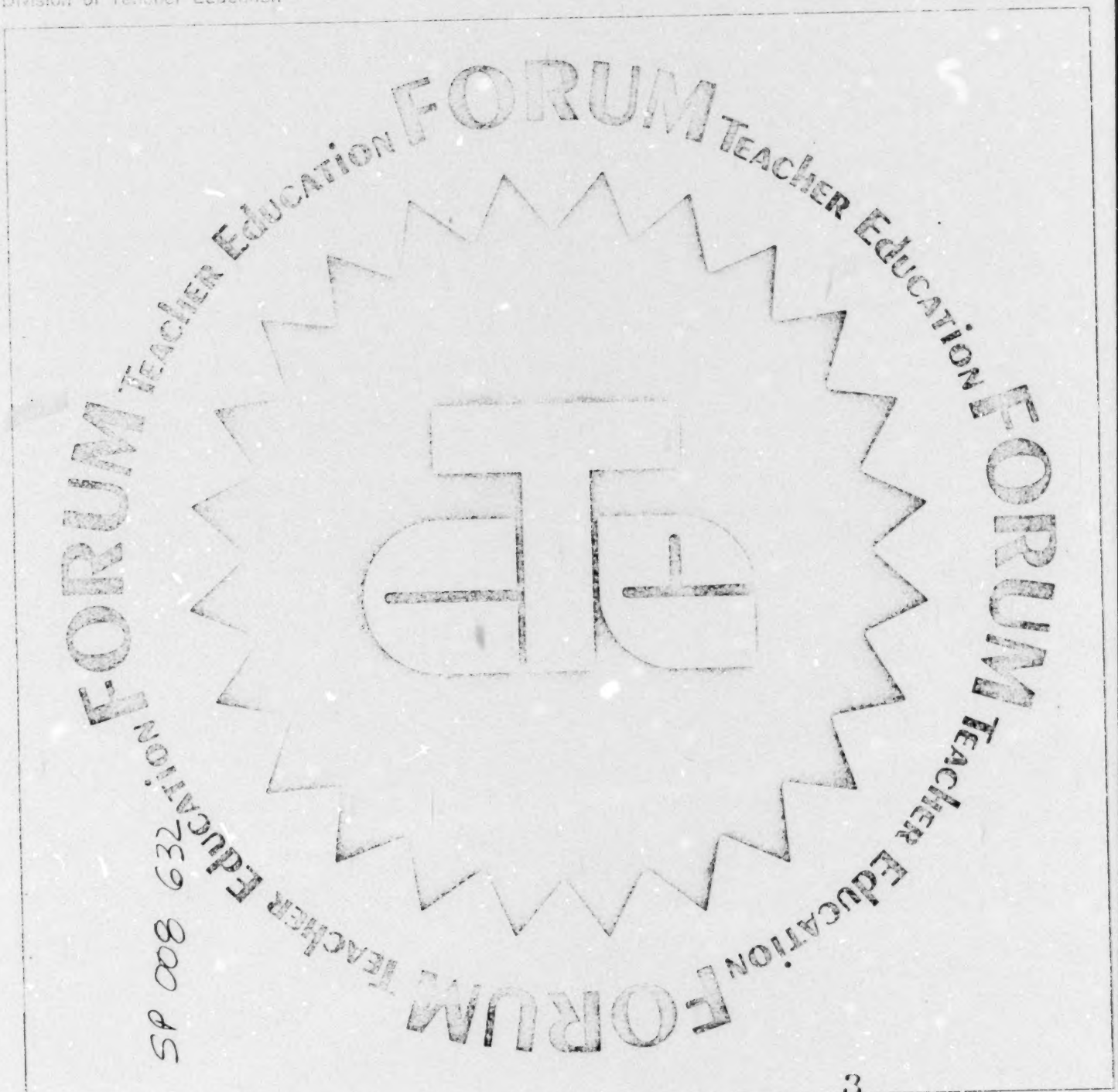

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EVALUATION PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

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In the fall of 1972-73 the authors decided to take advantage of an opportunity to obtain information on the evaluation preferences and practices of alternative schools.* A ready-made sample of subjects was available in the form of persons attending a series of institutes dealing with alternative schools. Six institutes, jointly sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the International Consortium for Options in Public Education, attracted 452 participants from 32 states representing every region of the continental United States and several other countries. All of the institutes employed the general theme of options in public education or educational alternatives. Each institute set aside a portion of its program for a focus on evaluation in alternative schools.

After each institute, letters were mailed to all individuals who had attended that institute. The letter provided the following information: (1) a statement that an enclosed questionnaire was designed to obtain information" . . . on evaluation plans and approaches as one of the follow-up procedures to the Institute;" (2) a declaration that neither the individual's name nor the name of his organization would be used without prior written permission from him; (3) a paragraph explaining that a report would be made through the newsletter of the International Consortium, Changing Schools, or sent directly to individuals upon request.

The questionnaire was focused on evaluation in alternative schools -- plans, procedures, and preferences. It was designed to permit individuals to respond in from 15 to 30 minutes time, depending upon how many open-ended comments were made and how detailed they were.

RESULTS

One hundred and eighteen (118) persons returned questionnaires that were reasonably complete. The results of the eight items contained in the questionnaire are presented in the following sections. The content of each item is described when the results of that item are presented.

*NOTE: Alternative schools may be found in separate buildings within buildings occupied by more conventional school programs, or without reference to any physical facility at all. For this reason, either "school" or "program" is an appropriate term for such options. The term "school" will be used in this report.

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ITEM 1: AFFILIATION WITH ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL OR PROGRAM

The first item requested each person to indicate his or her affiliation with a school by checking one of the seven categories below. The number of persons who identified themselves with each category is shown below.

63	Public School Program
5	Private School Program
7	University
2	State Education Department
5	Student
12	Other association
24	No association
118	Total

Except for the "public school" and "no association" categories, the numbers are small. As a result, we have not attempted to analyze response to other items according to these groupings.

ITEM 2: PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING EVALUATION

What are the present practices for conducting evaluation of alternative schools? Suppose much greater resources were available. What would be the value given to various options for conducting evaluation? To answer these questions, the respondents were asked to rank five procedures, first according to present practice under existing resources, and second according to the value they would assign if much greater resources were available. The listing in TABLE 1 represents the rank order of the procedures under present resources. The rank order if much greater resources were available is given in Column Two.

Analysis of the data for this item supports a number of interesting interpretations. First, the people involved in the alternative schools of this study are most receptive to the idea that the schools should be evaluated. This is seen first in the fact that under both rankings the item that stated "evaluation should be negligible or nonexistent" was ranked 5 or received the lowest ranking of all items. Thus, evaluation seemed to be held in high regard by the respondents. Additional information secured from open-ended items in another section of the study also revealed a positive attitude toward evaluation.

Second, the present practices for conducting evaluation are regarded as the responsibility of the school staff with little assistance from evaluation specialists. As seen in the ranking below, present practices tend not to utilize the evaluation specialist and external consultant agencies as the principal method of conducting evaluation. There is, however, a noticeable acceptance of the idea of evaluation specialists and external consultant agencies as seen in the order of ranking when much greater resources were assumed. Responses to the open-ended items support this interpretation. In fact, there is a strong indication of the need for expert help (see ITEM 4).

TABLE 1

*Rank Under Present Resources		Rank Given Much Greater Resources
a.	Evaluation should be carried on largely by the school staff with little or no assistance from evaluation specialists.	3
b.	Evaluation should be developed by evaluation specialists working out of the district central office. Other school personnel (teachers, administrators, counselors, and others) may assist him or her.	4
c.	Evaluation should be planned and carried out by an evaluation specialist employed by the schools, who services our program alone or with others. Other school personnel (teachers, administrators, counselors, etc.) may assist him or her.	1
d.	Evaluation should be planned and carried out by an external consultant or agency employed for the purpose. School personnel may assist in the process.	2
e.	Evaluation should be negligible or nonexistent.	5

*Rank computed by: (1) developing a frequency chart, (2) assigning a weighted value to each rank, i.e., rank 1=5, rank 2=4, etc., (3) multiplying the frequency of a given rank by the assigned value, (4) adding all values arrived at in Step #3 to determine a total weighted value, and (5) ranking by the values arrived at in Step #4.

While the final weighted values arrived at by this procedure cannot be used as standard scores, they do provide sufficient clarity to determine shifts in ranking.

ITEM 3: PURPOSES OF EVALUATION

This item provided five statements of purpose that appear to be appropriate for evaluation programs in alternative schools and one open-ended category to permit persons to add any purposes they felt were not included. Respondents were asked to rank each purpose according to its value in their present evaluation programs and to rank each a second time under the assumption that their programs were operating under more improved conditions.

The listing in TABLE 2 represents the rank order of the purposes under present program conditions. The rank order under improved conditions is presented in the right hand column. It is evident from a quick examination of TABLE 2 that the rankings are identical under present and improved conditions of operation. This finding suggests that there is widespread agreement among the respondents on the value of the different purposes. In fact, the second ordering may be said to be a kind of reliability check on this point. The ordering of values generally assigns highest priority to persons and purposes "closest to where the action is," and lowest priority to those that are most distant from the heart of the school's activity. The ordering gives precedence to professionals at the school level, with parents, students, and community following. Providing information to the Board of Education and the district administration is given next to the lowest ranking and the needs of funding agencies are considered last. It is not known whether the ranking of federal agencies is due to a lack of involvement with them or placing their needs at a lower level.

There are some curious points about the data. The mythology of alternative schools tells us that professionals who work in them have negative attitudes toward testing and evaluating students, and yet this is a stated or implied activity of the two purposes which were assigned the highest rankings. Perhaps the myth only applies to private alternatives or perhaps our sample is not representative of public alternative schools. Still another explanation is that "evaluation" is understood to mean something quite different from test administration, standardized scores, and similar, traditional terms. Finally, it is quite possible that the myth is indeed a myth, and that persons interested in public alternative schools are just as concerned as anyone else about student progress, program improvement, and other purposes of evaluation. Additional research could shed some light on this issue.

That the provision of information to the Board of Education and the district administration was given low priority in the rankings may suggest a political naivete on the part of persons interested in alternative schools. This statement is not made by way of suggesting that the rankings be reversed, but perhaps with some thought, data could be gathered to serve the needs of several audiences. For example, data collected primarily to achieve the first two purposes in the list could be used with the Board and district administration to promote favorable attitudes and higher levels of support for alternative schools. In other words, none of the goals are necessarily in conflict, and it may be possible to achieve several of them by careful planning.

Few responses were made to the opportunity of writing in additional purposes. Two emphasized providing information to the state, and one mentioned

TABLE 2

Rank According to Value in Present Program	Rank Under Improved Conditions
To provide information to the staff on what program changes are needed.	1
To provide information on student progress to parents and students.	2
To provide program information to parents and the community.	3
To provide information to the Board of Education or the District administration.	4
To provide data to a funding agency.	5

making information available to colleges. Another three stressed greater involvement of parents and students in policy determination, program decisions, and problem resolution. One focused on the stimulation of student and staff interest in the school as a whole rather than a single subject or sport, and another said that the present program of evaluation used all of the purposes listed to meet whatever crisis was current. Two statements were unclear. Perhaps the clearest message that can be derived from them is that (1) they added to the groups for whom information should be provided, and (2) they placed greater stress on student and parent involvement in the analysis of data and in making decisions from it.

ITEM 4: FACTORS THAT HINDER DEVELOPMENT OF IMPROVED EVALUATION PROGRAMS

There invariably seems to exist a discrepancy between what educators are doing and what they would like to be doing if things were in some way different. Knowing this, we wanted to identify what, if any, reasons were preventing the development of improved evaluation programs in alternative schools. An open-ended question asked the respondents to list the factors that prevented them from moving toward an improved evaluation program. Their reasons in order of frequency can be found in TABLE 3.

An analysis of the data in TABLE 3 takes on more meaning by observing that the responses were to an open-ended item. There was no suggestion to the respondent regarding the nature of his response, nor was he compelled to manufacture reasons which did not exist.

TABLE 3

Reason	Frequency Number	Percent
1. Personnel and Resources	37	31%
2. Money (lack of)	33	28%
3. Time	27	23%
4. Need for Better Tools	16	14%
5. Lack of Interest in Valid Information for Decision-making	16	14%
6. Lack of Administrative Support	11	9%
7. Lack of Demand for Evaluation	8	7%
8. Scarcity of Base Line Data - Beginning Prior to Initiation of the Alternative School or Program	5	4%
9. Lack of In-service Training	4	3%
10. Lack of Community Support	2	2%
11. Pressure for College Admission	2	2%
12. Subjective Nature of Many of the Program Objectives	1	1%
13. Lack of Objectivity Due to Personal Involvement	1	1%
14. Lack of Opportunity for Student Involvement	1	1%
15. Reluctance to Give Preferential Status to Alternative Schools by Conducting Separate Assessment	1	1%

Approximately one-third (31%) of the respondents believed that factors associated with personnel and resources prevented the development of an improved education program. An elaboration of this deterrent frequently cited the lack of expertise in evaluation to be the major problem (14 of the 37 responses). Other points were cited less frequently, i.e., negative

attitudes of staff toward evaluation, need for additional staff, staff anxiety toward evaluation, bias toward alternative schools, and bias of students toward testing.

The time factor was normally expanded on by simply saying that other things occupied so much of the staff time that they simply did not get around to developing an improved evaluation program. In a few instances the problem of time was interpreted to mean that students were in the school for a relatively short period; therefore it was difficult to develop an evaluation program which evaluated anything other than short term change.

The second most frequently cited problem, money - 28%, was seldom elaborated on. There simply wasn't enough of it in the opinions of the respondents.

The need for better tools (cited by 16% of the respondents) included a need for evaluation designs as well as standardized tests. The emphasis on tests seemed to be in finding suitable instruments for pre- and post- evaluations, and instruments designed to measure affective learnings.

The next three most frequently cited factors seem to be getting at essentially the same thing -- that evaluation is often not used for decision making, therefore is not held in high regard by administrators and the public as critical to the day to day operation. Lack of interest in valid information (16%), lack of administrative support (11%), and lack of demand for evaluation (8%), are the items included in this grouping. In some instances the respondents suggested that a partial solution to this problem would include (1) more extensive descriptions which would identify the unique role of the alternative school in meeting student needs, (2) more emphasis on stating meaningful objectives for the school, and (3) using evaluation as a tool for decision making rather than as a means of scuttling a school.

Two other items deserve consideration in this analysis, not because of the frequency of citing, but because of their relationship to other factors: scarcity of base line data (4%), and lack of in-service training (3%) were seen as difficulties in establishing evaluative processes which possessed some degree of sophistication, and which could answer the questions regarding the relative merits of the alternative school in comparison with conventional schools.

The remaining items on the list are provided without comment. Neither the frequency of listing nor elaborations by the respondents provide sufficient information for further analysis.

ITEM 5: USEFUL SERVICES

What services would alternative school personnel want if these services were available and specifically designed for use by alternative schools? Respondents to this study were asked the above question, and given an opportunity to rank a series of items as well as add others. The results of the ranking are listed in TABLE 4 in order of priority.

TABLE 4

	Rank
Development and implementation of an evaluation design	1
Training of staff in approaches to, and uses of evaluation	2
Analysis of data for your school	3
Consultation services of various kinds	4
Instrument identification and/or development	5
Comparative analysis of your program with others on objectives held in common	6
Interpretation and reporting of data	7
Resolution of evaluation problems	8
Storing and retrieving of data	9

We feel it is significant that the respondents to this study ranked as numbers one and two, items which concern evaluation design and staff development. This, it seems to us, reflects a most positive acceptance of the need for improved evaluation programs, as well as a willingness of staff to use evaluation results for school improvement as staff are trained to do so.

Lower in the ranking are items which relate to interpretation of data, resolving problems, and storing of data. While these items may be of considerable importance in a given school, they do not appear to represent generally high needs for the respondents in this study. This may be partially due to the accepted practice that data interpretation is the prerogative of those most closely associated with a given school.

The opportunity for respondents to add other services which they needed resulted in an extremely low response -- less than one-half of one percent (.3%). Even so, when other items were added they tended to have a high priority for the particular respondent. This would seem merely to support the idea that a given school will have needs which are of high priority to it, although not necessarily shared by others, e.g., help in communication between an alternative school and a given college admissions office, and evaluating parental satisfaction for a given school.

ITEM 6: EVALUATION SERVICE CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Item VI deals with the extent to which respondents feel receptive to the idea of a center which would provide evaluation services specifically to

alternative schools. Seven response categories were provided and respondents were asked to check all of those they thought appropriate. The response categories and the frequency of checks that each received are listed below.

57 Yes, but only if the major cost of the service does not have to be borne by the local system.

31 Yes, without any reservation.

23 Yes, we would be willing to bear much of the costs also if we could get the services we wanted.

22 No, because we barely have enough funds to carry out a program without worrying about evaluation.

4 No, I can't see the value of evaluation under any circumstances.

8 Other (Please specify)

One simple way to summarize these data is to compare the "yes" responses with the "no" responses. This comparison reveals that "yes" responses outnumber "no's" by more than two to one -- (111 to 43). It appears, then, that a center to provide evaluation services to alternative schools is more likely to be viewed in positive terms than negative ones. This conclusion is reinforced by an examination of the negative and positive responses at the extremes. The "yes, without reservation" was checked 31 times whereas "no . . . under any circumstances" was checked by only four persons.

The modal response (57 persons) indicates that people favor such a center only if the major cost of the services does not have to be borne by the local system. About 20% (23 persons) checked a willingness to bear much of the costs if they could get the services they wanted. Another 20% said no because evaluation was already built into their schools.

ITEM 7: IMPORTANT RESEARCH NEEDS

Item 7 requested the respondents to indicate ". . . the most important research that needs to be done on alternative schools." It was the first of two items that people were requested to answer only if they wished to do so and had the time. As a result, we did not expect to receive the number of responses we did. In all, 59 different individuals identified a total of 119 research ideas which they felt were important.

Before entering into a discussion of the ideas, it may be useful to point out who responded. Persons with university affiliation had the highest response rate (6 of 7) on this item. The next highest response group was also the largest in number, the public school group. Sixty percent of this group

responded to the question. The lowest response rate (4 of 24) came from those who said they had no association with an alternative school. None of these findings are very surprising. University professors are both research and response oriented. Persons associated with public school alternatives would have a "vested" interest in research questions and those with no association are likely to feel they don't really know what research needs to be carried out.

The categories and subcategories below indicate the areas in which research needs to be undertaken as identified by this sub-sample. The number of responses in each category is given in parentheses.

Students (58)
- Success after graduation (29)
- Growth in or related to school (21)
- Selection of students (4)
- Other student-oriented ideas (4)

Alternative Schools (26)
- Relations with other agencies (16)
- Establishment, development, and survival (5)
- Other school-oriented ideas (5)

Program (15)
- Successful or effective programs (15)

Staffing (5)
- Selection, training, and burnout (5)

Research and Evaluation (10)
- Approaches, techniques, and data (7)
- Other research oriented ideas (3)

Miscellaneous Ideas (5)
- Parents and community (2)
- Others (3)

Total Responses - 119

As the reader can see from the data, the number of ideas for research related to students was more than double the suggestions in the next largest category. The second largest group of suggestions focused on alternative schools as a unit and the third on curriculum and similar concerns. It may be instructive to examine the makeup of ideas in each of the categories.

Students

Most of the suggestions for research related to students fell into two closely related categories. The largest set focused on the "success" of students after graduation including college acceptance and success, career development and job success, the implementation of a satisfying life style, and similar concerns. The second set called for an examination of academic

achievement, skill development, development in the affective domain, or similar topics associated with the growth and development of students during the school experience.

It is interesting that half of the responses recommending research related to students were directed at the effects of the school upon students after graduation. As expected, some of these dealt with how easily students from alternative schools would be accepted into college and how well they would succeed. A small number dealt with job success and the development of satisfactory life styles. The greatest number (18 of 29) were general in nature, using such phrases as "follow-up study of student success after they have left alternative schools," "post graduate success of student," "post high school follow-up of graduates," and similar comments.

The comments in the second set (in-school growth) appear to be similar to what one would expect to receive from any group of public school teachers with one important exception. Over 40% (9 of 21) of the comments in this set focused on the need to study student development in the affective domain. In other words, the respondents showed an almost equal concern for growth in the affective and cognitive domains. This point of view is best summarized by one of the respondents who wrote:

> Changes in student attitudes toward peers, changes in self concept, changes in teacher-pupil relations are all hard to measure, but are the significant changes that should occur in the open classroom.

Of the remaining suggestions pertaining to students, four focused on the question of how students were selected for alternative schools and the other four covered student characteristics and needs, their use of authority, and other ideas.

Alternative Schools

Twenty-six suggestions were directed at alternative schools as total entities. Of these, nine were concerned with the relationship between alternative schools and other schools within each system and across systems. The latter category included accreditation issues and institutional relationships with colleges. A second set focused on issues of launching, development, and survival, and a third set included a variety of other ideas. Below are illustrations from each of the three categories:

I. "Functioning of alternative schools within public school systems - cohabitation, administrative problems, dealing with state and district high school graduation requirements."

"Why a separate alternative school, why not a mixture of alternative choices woven into a traditional school curriculum?"

"Accreditation by state agencies."

"Transcripts and evaluation forms."

II. "Survival, growth, autonomy."

"Life-history research, on many different schools, showing the sequence of stages through which they inevitably pass . . ."

III. "Type of setting(s) (physical) appropriate."

"Costs - alternative vs. traditional."

Program

All of the comments classified under this heading dealt with the "success" or "effectiveness" of programs, curricula, and instructional methods. It should be pointed out that this group of comments represents the opposite side of the same coin as those focused on student achievement. The difference is a matter of emphasis. The comments placed in this category emphasized program success, whereas those placed in the student categories emphasized student achievement, but each bears a direct relationship to the other in that it is difficult to imagine a program succeeding without students succeeding and vice-versa. The illustrations below will suffice to indicate the range of comments under this heading:

> What methods are being used that research and evaluation indicate are producing positive results?
>
> Evaluation of programs and revision (are) vital.
>
> Investigate why successful programs are successful.
>
> Is the alternative program doing what it was intended (to do)?

Staffing

All of the five comments on staffing revolved about their selection and training, with one exception - it focused on what it termed staff "burnout." Perhaps the most interesting feature of this category is the relatively small number of persons interested in staffing issues. This may be accounted for by a relatively small number of administrators who are usually concerned about such things or by the tendency of staff persons (teachers) not to be as aware of their own problems as they are of others'. Nothing in the data suggests that either is operative. Here are illustrative comments.

> Take a look at the types of teachers drawn into staffing alternative schools: how to make good use of their idealism yet how to broaden their base in terms of sound course content and the confidence to teach it.
>
> I suspect that such schools attract certain types of people, both as staff and student, with various typical patterns of investment in the enterprise that follow from these self-selection variables.

On staff definition and training - on staff burnout.

Research and Evaluation

Suggestions in this category usually mentioned the development of instruments or approaches in the collection of data and similar concerns. Often these comments were placed in the context of the unique needs of alternative schools and their students. Examples are given below:

> Develop appropriate measures.
>
> Developing research approaches that are compatible with the style of the option yet (are) equally valid with other evaluation designs that may apply to other alternatives.
>
> Here are six areas that we feel need research: (1) Is there a meta-methodology that can be used effectively in setting designs for the variety of alternative schools? (2) Are there unobtrusive measures that are common in alternative schools? (3) Participant observation and interview techniques and design in the natural setting of an alternative school. (4) What is the validity and reliability of tests redesigned for specific settings? How can the redesign be tested for reliability and validity before it is administered? (5) How do different audiences interpret and use generated data? (6) Development of design to test the overall local system for effectiveness if it has a variety of alternatives -- a testing of the notion rather than the specific program.

Miscellaneous Ideas

Five ideas did not fit into any of the previous categories. One of them suggested research on parents; another focused on the community; others were not clear. No quotations are offered in this category.

ITEM 8: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The last item of the questionnaire asked persons to " . . . add any comments you wish about research or evaluation for alternative schools." Thirty-three individuals offered 38 comments covering a variety of topics. The headings below provide a basis for discussion.

Specific Research and Evaluation Tasks

Nine comments were directed at the need to accomplish specific tasks such as the need for cognitive and affective instruments, an operational

definition of success, providing feedback to school staff, and similar concerns. The statements below provide illustrations of these:

> What instruments are used for cognitive measurement?
>
> Short, valid, objective, reliable affective evaluation instruments needed.
>
> And how does one operationally define success?
>
> Any evaluation procedure which only takes basic skills into account is of no value to us. We are interested in human values, self esteem, creativity, group dynamics, etc.

Recommendations for Improving Research and Evaluation

Seven statements concerned ways in which evaluation could be improved. This doesn't mean that each of the seven statements was necessarily consistent with the others, but they did address themselves to improvement. In almost every case the suggestions called for broad approaches or new orientations to evaluation rather than the recommendation of specific techniques. The illustrations below suggest both the common emphasis on improvement and the variety represented in the comments.

> It seems to me that parents, staff and students should cooperate in evaluation. Therefore, it seems that descriptions of process whereby joint evaluations could occur and some design instruments that are merely samples sent along would be much more helpful than making alternative schools dependent upon some "outside" expert to tell them what, how, and why the evaluation should be.
>
> Approach (research or evaluation) from scientific viewpoint, neither having preconceived favorable or unfavorable (only questionable) attitude as to effect of any program. Let chips fall where they may . . .
>
> Because of uneducated Boards of Education and parents, many evaluation programs are wrongly designed as only summative reports looking only to measure success or failure. Therefore, it is often wise to be a little less than totally objective and be politically astute in designing your evaluation model.
>
> I would find it useful to get past the hypocritical distinction between evaluation for us (alternative school program) and evaluation for them (public school system which funds us and other funding agencies). Obviously then we would have to look for shared goals and find ways to measure those.

Criticism of Research and Evaluation

The eleven comments that were grouped in this section represent comments critical of research and evaluation in general or in one case, critical of the questionnaire which was distributed for this study. Again, there is no agreement on the nature of what is wrong. Some comments appear directed at the whole concept of evaluation and others at more specific approaches to it. Again, illustrative comments provide the reader a sense of the different positions.

> Too frequently research focuses on cognitive or skill development and neglects recognition that students in alternative programs by natural selection are unusual. Therefore, comparative research is frequently invalid or unreliable.

> Research and evaluation are in such a disgusting state in education in general that it is impossible to (really) offer a comment! We don't seem to have any research and evaluation experts around.

> Let's get away from the sort of incredibly trivial evaluation targets that have commonly been used . . . How many dumb "self-concept" measures have been given kids in free schools or open schools, because that's the closest thing anyone could think of to what the school was all about?

Comments of a General Nature

Eleven comments not only did not fit into one of the first three categories but they did not even seem to be directed toward research and evaluation. Nor did they fit into any common theme or themes. A few illustrations are presented below to give the reader the sense of tremendous variety to these comments.

> A monthly media vehicle would be helpful.

> Higher education institutions must be at the forefront to help alternatives happen. Do it now!

> I think administrators are too "up-tight" to recognize the individuality of students today -- many feel the alternative school will get the creative non-conformist off campus. Why not work to get that <u>non-conformist</u> leadership in the general program.

> (Need for) teacher/position clearinghouse.

CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions which can be drawn from this study are:

1. The personnel involved with alternative schools are receptive to the idea that the schools should be evaluated. While the present practices for conducting evaluation assign the responsibility to school staff, there is acceptance for involvement of evaluation specialists and external evaluators, assuming the school can afford them.

2. In ranking the purposes of evaluation, the respondents clearly indicate their preference for appraising professional staff, and disseminating information to parents and students over providing information to boards of education and funding agencies. These data further support the commitment that persons in public alternative schools have toward evaluation, but also raise the possibility that they do not value as highly as they might the need to provide information to their governing bodies.

3. As perceived by the respondents, the major deterrents to improved evaluation include the lack of, or weakness in, personnel and resources, money, time, evaluation tools, and use of evaluation for decision making. To assist in the alleviation of these deterrents, the respondents expressed a need for assistance in the development of evaluation designs and the training of staff to conduct evaluation.

4. The idea of a center to provide evaluation services to alternative schools is viewed favorably by more than two-thirds of the respondents; however, the majority favor this only if the major cost could be borne by individuals or agencies other than the local system.

5. Relatively large numbers of respondents felt that additional research is warranted related to both the students and the alternative schools with twice as many sensing the need for student related research. Success after graduation in college or on the job appeared as the dominant concern, although high school achievement in both the cognitive and affective domains was viewed as needing further examination. The latter was principally concerned with the relationship of alternative schools to other schools in the system, accreditation issues, and program effectiveness.